



Inaugural Lecture Series 140

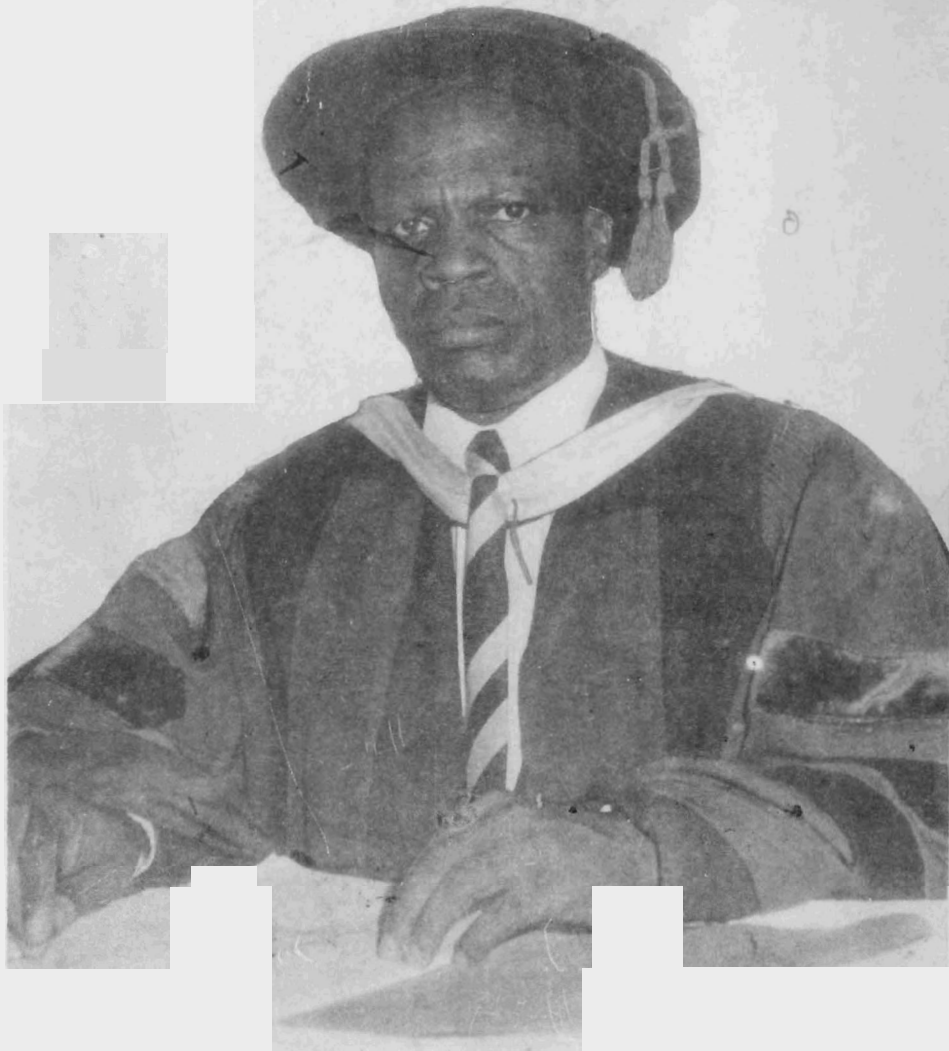
**RETHINKING THE STUDY OF NIGERIAN
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

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**An Inaugural Lecture Delivered at Oduduwa Hall
Obafemi Awolowo University
Ile-Ife, NIGERIA**

on

Tuesday 6th June, 2000.

Inaugural Lecture Series 140

Obafemi Awolowo University Press Ltd. Ile Ife, Nigeria.

(c)

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ISSN 0189-7845

Printed by
Obafemi Awolowo University Press Limited,
Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

A definition of the parameters of a field of study, that is, the boundaries, landmarks, and terrain that distinguish it from other scientific and humanistic disciplines, is normally considered a good place to begin any academic exercise as this inaugural lecture. Unfortunately, as far as I know, no one has produced a simple definition of the study of public administration --- at least one upon which most practitioners and scholars agree. Attempting to define the core values and focus of twenty-first century public administration provides lively debates and even sharp disagreements among students of the field.

A major difficulty in arriving at a precise and universally acceptable definition arises in part from the accelerated growth of public administration, which today appears to be all-encompassing. Public administrators are engaged in technical though not necessarily mundane details: they prepare budgets for government or classify jobs in post offices or evaluate the performances of drug treatment centres. In the same perspective, they are also vitally concerned with the major goals of society and the development of resources for achieving those goals as well as the development of resources for achieving those goals within the context of a rapidly changing political environment. For example, if an engineering staff of a state agency proposes to build a highway, this decision appears at first glance a purely administrative activity. However, it can and indeed does involve a wide range of social values related to pressing concerns such as land use patterns or land tenure system, energy consumption, the control of



pollution, and mass transit planning. The broad problems of race relations, the general economic well-being of a society, the allocation of scarce physical and human resources affect even simple administrative decisions about highway constructions.

Public administration does not operate in a vacuum but is deeply intertwined with the critical dilemmas confronting the entire society. The problem then is, how can a scholar of public administration reasonably and concisely define a field so interrelated with all of society.

In the literature, attempts at defining public administration seem to identify the discipline with the following:

- (1) the executive branch of government (yet it is related in important ways to the legislative and judicial branches);
- (2) the formulation and implementation of public policies,
- (3) the involvement in a considerable range of problems concerning human behaviour and cooperative human effort;
- (4) the production of public goods and services.

But, trying to pin down public administration in much more specific details, becomes, according to some analysts like Harold Stein, a fruitless endeavour. The many variables and complexities of public administration make almost every administrative situation a unique event, eluding any highly systematic categorization. As Stein writes "public administration is a field in which every man is his own codifier

and categorizer and the categories adopted must be looked on as relatively evanescent" Stein, 1952. But I must indicate that, the elusiveness of a disciplinary core for public administration gives the subject its strength, fascination, for students must draw upon many fields and disciplines, as their own resources, in order to solve a particular administrative problem. In this regard, I share a similar view as Mosher who said "Perhaps it is best that Public Administration not be defined. It is more an area of interest than a discipline, more a focus than a separate science... It is necessarily cross-disciplinary. The overlapping and vague boundaries should be viewed as a resource, even though they are irritating to some with orderly minds".

This controversy over the boundaries, scope and purpose of public administration rages on among administrative theorists. As a matter of fact, the field's "identity crisis" as Dwight Waldo once labelled the dilemma was constantly reflected in the writings of the founding fathers of Public Administration. In such studies, three different patterns of public administration have been identified, and are reflected specifically in the political philosophies of Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. At one time or the other, these three basic administrative patterns: *Hamiltonism classicism*, *Jeffersonian romanticism* and *Madisonian neoclassicism* have dominated discussion on Public administration theory. Much of the on-going confusion over defining public administration is due to sudden and simultaneous reappearance of all three administrative patterns, the proponents of each arguing that their theory best outlines and explains the field.

At this point, I must stress emphatically that the challenges posed to scholars of public administration transcend resolving the crisis of identity, and defining the scope of public administration. Scholars in the field face criticism concerning the orientation of research as well as the focus of the courses taught in public administration. This inaugural lecture is about the orientation or direction of research and teaching in public administration with specific reference to *Nigeria Public Administration*. My argument is that scholarship in Public Administration in Nigeria and in virtually all modern states has, for a long time, been more concerned with developing formal representations of the activities of the State than with understanding the relevance of the formal and informal institutions of governance which exist at the community level.

Unfortunately, problems concomitant to the *government failure* have also not been dealt with adequately in traditional venues of intellectual inquiry. I argue that there should be a change of focus of scholarship in Public Administration, and the need to pay more attention to those institutional structures which succeed where those of the state have been found to fail.

I shall proceed by reviewing what the earlier scholars of public administration focused attention on, and what scholars of Nigerian public administration have been mostly interested in, before moving on to discuss in some detail the rationale for a paradigm shift in the study of Nigeria public administration. I shall look at the dimensions of failure of the state. Later in this address I shall elaborate on those areas where I feel scholars of Nigerian public administration should pay attention in their intellectual inquiries.

Pre-Occupation of Pioneering Scholars of Public Administration

A major pre-occupation of the pioneering scholars of public administration was to resolve the issue of what public bureaucracies should be doing in government set ups in modern societies. This was a major pre-occupation of Woodrow Wilson (1887) Almond and Powell (1966) and Fred Riggs (1964) for example. These scholars consider public bureaucracies as executors of the decisions of government. They are not expected to be policy makers or partakers in policy making. Public bureaucracies are to be involved in "rule application". The approach seeks to separate politics from administration. In this perspective Riggs stated that:

The bureaucracy is supposed to be politically "neutral": it does not participate in policy determination, it has no specific interest of its own. it does not exercise any important power. It is, in other words, the obedient servant of the government, hence of the public whom the regime serves.

This is echoing the Weberian perception of the role of public bureaucracies in modern societies. But Riggs expressed some reservations on the view that public bureaucracies should be charged with the task of implementing the laws as stated above. According to Riggs, Weber's view on the role of public bureaucracies is an expression of the ideal, and may not necessarily reflect what obtains in reality. He suggested a mid-way model for analyzing the role of public bureaucracies in

modern societies. This he christened *structural-functional* theoretical construct.

The *structural-functional* theoretical construct is explained thus: a government bureaucracy is a *structure*. A *structure*, according to Riggs connotes, "any pattern of behaviour which has become a standard feature of a social system." Consequently, bureaucracy or public administrative machinery as a structure consists of a wide range of actions taken by public officials in consonance with "the goals and work of the bureau." In the same vein, the bureau also "includes the relevant actions of 'outsiders' with whom it interacts as in the normal course of business, its *clientele* or *audience*."

Riggs proceeds further to classify the nature of the functions performed by bureaucracies into two. According to him, "whenever a structure performs a large number of functions, we may say it is 'functionally diffuse;' when it performs a limited number of functions it is 'functionally specific'." According to this analyst, the "diffuse" concept describes the administrative role in traditional societies, while the "functionally specific" model or "diffracted model" (a term borrowed from physics) refers to administration in industrialised societies. Whether Riggs succeeded in forging a mid-way model or not is not the issue here. What is important to our discussion is that even with the mid-way theoretical model, Riggs has not successfully moved away from the politics-administration dichotomy of Weber and Wilson. His inclusion of the developing countries within the theoretical framework under review appears not to be strong enough as a tool of analysis; and it cannot lead us far enough in our

assessment of the role of public administrative machinery in developing countries like Nigeria. At least the model falls short of clear parameters for assessing public bureaucracies in the third world countries, as it fails to address the issue of public administration and development. The role of public administration in the development process cannot be ignored as far as the developing countries are concerned because the affected countries need all its institutions (public administrative machinery and non-governmental institutions) for a successful take-off with respect to socio-economic development.

It is James L. Perry who provides a more detailed intellectual account of what public bureaucracies should be involved in, in modern societies; though his presumptions remain highly challengeable also. According to Perry the challenges faced by public administration and its operators, better referred to as public administrators, could be summarised in five categories. The cross-cutting features of these challenges are itemised as follows: (a) maintaining constitutional order, (b) achieving technical competence, (c) coping with public expectations, (d) managing complexity, uncertainty, and change, and (e) behaving ethically. From this configuration of challenges it is evident that items (b), (c), and (e) deal directly and indirectly with the developmental roles of public administration. Items (a) and (d) could be said to bear tangential relationships with the developmental roles of the public administrative machinery. The explanation of these challenges, each in succession, will shed more light on these observations.

(a) Maintaining constitutional order

In any democratic society, the constitution serves as the ultimate arbiter for the appropriateness of public and private interests (Ostrom, 1987:). In the United States of America, for example, constitutional role is central to public administration. But this is not to say that the constitution guides the role of public administrators or public administration (Waldo, 1980:66). In fact, it was observed, that the American constitution does not contain the words "administration" and "management". But that notwithstanding, the founders of the US union were clear about what they expected public administrators to do. The word "administration," was mentioned more than 124 times in the Federalist Papers. The centrality of the American constitution is that public administration should behave in agreement with the former's charter and consistently with its promise. In essence, the American constitution expects the public administrators to appreciate and actively support what is regarded as "constitutional correctness," which is manifested in separation of power and protection against the self-interest of citizens. In addition, public administrators, in maintaining constitutional order, must seek public esteem through their service to others. They must also prepare for the attainment of this public esteem with a properly rounded education and understanding about constitutional principles, history, politics, law, government, and management.

(b) Achieving technical competence

This is required or expected of public administration so as to sustain or even enhance their capabilities in performing the roles assigned to them by political and administrative superiors. This has been a key expectation of public administrators even in the United States since the eighteenth century. In the early twentieth century in the United States, there was the City Manager Movement and other progressive reforms aimed at enhancing technical competence among public administrators (Kaufman 1969). As a way of enhancing technical competence among bureaucrats, some level of professionalisation is desirable. But there must be a balance between professional judgement and popular control. Emphasis on professionalisation alone poses some dangers. For example, it has the disadvantage of simultaneously insulating public servants from both political favouritism and political control in the public interest (Willbern, 1954:13-21).

(c) Coping with public expectation:

The performance of public administrators is also measured by the amount of pressures they are able to sustain from the members of the public who confront these administrators with a series of problems. Sometimes, these problems are of high magnitude and of wide scope. Sometimes too, these problems or goals set by members of the public are inconsistent and quite contradictory. In that sense, public administrators are said to be confronted with "impossible tasks." Unfortunately, public administrators are rarely judged

by their efforts, but more often than not, by the societal outcomes of their actions. It is in this domain that one begins to ask the question of how many communities have been served with potable water, electricity, housing facilities, banking facilities, and so on. While it is expected that public administrators will enhance their output with minimum resources dispensed (Walker, 1987:8), one should realize that on several occasions, citizens demanding services could be motivated both by political rhetoric and by their own instincts about human betterment. They, the citizens, expect more from public agencies and they are hardly satisfied with holding fast against even seemingly intractable problems (Whorton and Whorthley, 1981:357-361). When this situation arises, public administrators "wear the hat of agent for the social good as well as the hat of incipient wrongdoers." But the bottom line is that public servants and public administrators must provide services, at least basic services, to the minimum satisfaction of the people that they claim to be serving. And it is also expected of public administrators to carry out their responsibilities towards the citizens' and clients' viewpoints whether or not they conflict with one another. In the same perspective, public administrators must resist defending their ambiguous position by upholding public interest.

(d) Managing complexity, uncertainty and change

In very many modern societies today, either consciously or unconsciously, the polycentric order prevails. This is manifested in pluralism of structural arrangements, values, political orientations and interests. In fact, it is a complexity

which has multiplied exponentially. It is common knowledge that complexity is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it is capable of invigorating the people called on to manage it, in this case public administrators. Where this succeeds, complexity helps to preserve a system of governance. But it can, on the other hand, exceed the capacity of public administrators to respond to and cope with it. Consequently, it frustrates one's laudable objectives (Mosher, 1980:542).

It has also been suggested that where complexity represents both a challenge and a seemingly insurmountable obstacle to successful public action, public administrators must be pragmatic, by following different strategic paths. One of such paths would be to put the best minds to work on complex problems, facilitating their successful resolution. One other strategy would be to design systems for collective action that conquer the impediments of complexity and facilitate the success of human beings despite their individual weaknesses and shortcomings.

(e) Upholding ethics and accountability

At the centre of the ethical challenge for public administrators are two questions. In the first instance, for whom is the public administrator an agent? Secondly, what are the justifications for individual conduct and institutional practices and modes of thought (Brown, 1986:56-68)?

From the foregoing, it is clear that earlier scholars of public administration lay emphasis on the state-run bureaucracies. Scholars of Nigerian public administration followed in the same manner to analyse in an historical

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perspective the role of the state, its public institutions in governance and in the development process

The Study of Nigerian Public Administration: Historical Review

The study of Nigeria public administration was initially dominated by three sets of analysts. These include the British Colonials, the Indigenous Practising Administrators and the Academics.

British Colonials

These included senior colonial administrators who set out the rules of procedure and precepts for political officials in the colonial state. Fredrick Lugard's *Political Memoranda* was handed down to officers of the colonial administration such as the District Officers more or less as a "bible", Donald Cameron's *Principles of Native Administration and their application 1934*, was a key handbook for senior colonial administrators.

It is also possible to cite the works of Crooker: *A Critique of British Colonial Administration*, Margaret Perham: *Native Administration, in Nigeria*, Hensler: *Yesterday's Rules*, as well as *The British in Northern Nigeria*, Kirk Greene: *The Principles of Native Administration in Nigeria: Selected Comments 1900:1947*. These publications are critiques of the memoranda issued by the colonial administrators. There are others who focused on the biographies and autobiographies of those who served in the colonial civil service. In this perspective, one could mention the examples of Henry Hall

Barrack and Bush in Northern Nigeria, as well as Donald Cameron, *My Tangayika and Some Nigeria*, as well as Margaret Parham's biography *On Lord Lugard* and J.H. Smith's *Colonial Cadet in Nigeria*. All of these studies in one way or the other concentrated more on the nature, style, and motivation of colonial administration.

The indigenous administrators (that is Nigerian administrators) focused on autobiographies detailing experiences in the civil service. The earlier works of Augustus Adebayo and Simon Adebo are most relevant in this perspective. There are those who made contributions to academic-oriented publications. Such contributors include Philip Asiodu and Alison Ayida. The book *Twenty Years of Nigerian Public Administration* edited by Ladipo Adamolekun provided a forum for Nigerian civil servants to comment on their experiences in federal or state governments.

Finally, there were some of these indigenous civil servants who wrote about specific aspects of the Nigerian public administration, especially in forms of reports on special assignments. In this perspective, are Simon Adebo's *Salaries and Wages Commission report* and that of Jerome Udoji on the same subject.

With respect to academics, their intellectual activities were carried out initially in the following specialized institutions:

Institute of Administration, Ahmadu Bello, University Zaria,

Institute of Administration, University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University Ile Ife), and

The Administrative Staff College (ASCON) Topo Badagry.

The pioneering scholars of Nigerian Public Administration, include Professors Adebayo Adedeji, Ladipo Adamolekun, Dr. M.J. Balogun to mention just a few. They concentrated on developing leading materials from the point of view of Nigerians. Intellectual publications of these and several other scholars of Nigerian public administration paid full attention to:

Indigenization of the Nigerian Civil Service
Improving performances of the public services in general and the civil service in particular

Other subjects that these scholars were interested in, include:

Nigerian Public Enterprises
Social Services Administration
Planning Administration
Local Government Administration:
Judiciary and Accountability

Other scholars who emerged later continued with almost the same research orientation and training as these pioneering scholars of Nigerian Public Administration. One major flaw which has been identified in the intellectual efforts of these scholars is that, there has been no philosophical premise underpinning all their research activities. Their research undertakings have focused on examples of British and American public services, laying emphasis on the transplantation of those public service systems to Nigeria. Thus, most if not all of the studies undertaken by these scholars have been limited to tinkering with the public institutional structures inherited from the British imperial

masters and from other industrialized countries of the West. More importantly, there was for a long time a near total neglect of those indigenous institutional arrangements created by the people, and outside the formal public sector in the studies of these scholars. The efforts of the people at creating indigenous institutions to serve to provide locally meaningful solutions to problems confronting the people in their environments were very rarely studied by the category of scholars already mentioned. Worse still, the literature is replete with studies from other scholars, mainly social scientists too, which clearly support the development of state-centred mode of intellectual analysis both in Nigeria, and in almost all other African countries. In this perspective, the examples of Easman, 1963; Apter, 1965 and Huntington, 1968 are often cited in the literature. Most of the writings of these scholars could be said to have drawn upon Thomas Hobbes ideas of state sovereignty. For example, Easman argues that, in order to resolve problems of nation-building and of socio-economic development in independent African states, there must be a governing elite that "acts as the energizing and guiding vehicle for the modernizing process". He suggests also that there should be "a doctrine which legitimatizes in terms of programmed action the norms, priorities, instruments and strategies of the governing elite (Easman 1963:30). Huntington in a related manner, expressed optimism in the capability of the modern elite in achieving modernization, which is characterized among other things by socio-economic development in the transitional societies of the Third World, with special emphasis on Africa.

Huntington reserves a "central role function" for the modern elites, especially the civil servants in the crusade for modernization in the underdeveloped world. According to him, the central control function which involves the mechanism of coercion in a society is better reserved for the civil service, itself an important instrument in the hands of the state. Huntington builds his hope for a successful modernization in the Third World on the civil service because according to him, it is a professional institution, its members (civil servants) have been subjected to lengthy periods of education and training, it is an institution noted for a "standard of performance" and it is endowed with "a sphere of competence". Huntington also includes, with respect to the civil service, that its career aspects and lifespan are clearly well defined. What one infers from Huntington's description of the critical role which the civil service must play in the modernization process is his strong conviction that the miracle of development is only possible with the modern elites who dominate the civil services. Invariably, Huntington lends his support to the control being exercised by the state in governance and in the development process, using its own institutional set ups, one of which is the civil service (Huntington 1968: 164-170).

Some other scholars have also echoed the opinions expressed about the need for centralization in the underdeveloped states as expressed by Easman, Apter and Huntington. For example, Rostow 1971, Black 1971 and Ward 1971 argued that some form of authoritarian rule is a *sine qua non* if underdeveloped countries, including Nigeria, are to transform from the position of socio-economic backwardness to that of meaningful socio-economic growth.

With specific reference to Nigeria, several scholars (political scientists, economists, non-economists) have picked up the same ideas about the invincibility of the state, if Nigeria is to resolve the problem of governance crises, as well as transform from a position of socio-economic stagnation to that of greatness. Preference for a centralized state is evident in the intellectual debates and writings embarked upon by these scholars in the 60s through 80s. Specifically, Ojetunji Aboyade 1968; Akeredolu-Ale, 1985; Akin Mabogunje 1980, expressed their doubt over the workability of the federal system of government devoid of a strong centre in governance, as well as a device through which meaningful socio-economic development could be achieved. Those scholars were pointing fingers at developments in Japan, China and Brazil, where there have been strong efforts at achieving socio-economic greatness through a centralized system of government. Several other scholars lost confidence in the federal structure that emphasizes self-governance (Oyovbaire 1985). If these scholars would not want the federal system of government discarded, they would prefer a federal pattern of governance characterized by a very strong centre. However, not all Nigerian scholars share the same view on centralization. Some others have dissociated themselves from the centralized system of government that is characterized by a superordinate-subordinate pattern of relationship between the centre and the sub-national governments. The examples of Wole Soyinka, 1962 and Chinua Achebe, 1966 merit being mentioned here. And having witnessed the failure of the state to deliver development over the past three decades or so, Akin Mabogunje has moved away from his initial position on

centralization in governance and in development in Nigeria to that of people-centred strategy for effective governance and meaningful development. This is reflected in many of his publications and policy advocacy work in recent years.

I have spent a larger portion of my academic career challenging the preponderant role which the state has played in governance and in the promotion of socio-economic development in West Africa. My research interest has focused on administration and development in Nigeria and in some Francophone African countries with special reference to Benin Republic. In more than forty-five articles, monographs and edited books and contributions to books which I have published on this subject alone, I challenged the state for its stiff central control, poorly articulated developmental policies, ineffective intergovernmental relations network. As a result of these deficiencies people have been constitutionally kept out of the management of the affairs that affect them and they have had virtually no say in the development programmes and projects designed and executed by the state and its relevant institutions. I tried to demonstrate in several of these studies that the national/state governments, in the African countries studied, i.e. Nigeria, Benin, even Cote d'Ivoire, have refused to create conducive structures for the administration of development at the local level. If I agree with Professor Langrod that:

"L'administration doit faconner son environnement, et ne pas se contenter d'un combat d'arriere garde' In other words,

"administration must take control of its environment, be at the forefront and should not be satisfied with fighting a rear-guard battle".

It must be added that, for administration to successfully conquer and be in firm control of its environment, both politically, socially and economically, it must carry the people within that environment along. That is what, successive governments in nearly all African states including Nigeria have refused to do. With specific reference to Nigeria, this has been a perennial management problem facing the state agencies which are charged with the task of promoting agricultural development and rural development in general. In about ten other publications, I challenged the Nigerian state for its inconsistencies in policy formulation, poor financial and human resources management in matters relating to agricultural revolution and rural development. Policy formulation, articulation and resource management in all its ramifications have not involved the people who are expected to be the beneficiaries of enunciated agricultural development programmes. I have used the management and the activities of the River Basin Development Authorities to support this particular argument.

In these efforts, also, I have tried to query the attention given to the state in scholarship, if reference is made to the ways in which governance is pursued, development efforts are articulated and the welfare of Nigerians are coordinated. My argument is, the state has failed in its responsibilities towards

the Nigerian citizens. I support my argument with more concrete evidence.

The Failure of State Administration

One way of measuring the success, or failure, of governments in modern societies is to assess how far such governments go in developing or failing to develop the conditions for satisfying the basic needs of the people they govern. Such needs include basic socioeconomic infrastructures, public services, and the creation of an orderly and productive way of life. In addition, the effectiveness of such governments is measured by their ability to mobilize or generate adequate resources (financial, human and material), and the utilization of these resources to meet basic needs, as well as facilitate opportunities on the path of socioeconomic development generally (Stöhr, 1981:). But there is also the presupposition that the ability or inability of governments to achieve these goals depends on the style or approach adopted by the governments concerned with pursuing these goals (Taylor, 1992):.

With reference to African countries, several scholars have argued that the tragedy that contemporary Africa is facing stems essentially from the structurally defective pattern of governance adopted by the African political elites since their countries attained political independence in the 1960s (Wunsch and Olowu, 1990):.

The form of governance in Nigeria has for a long time been centralized. This manifests itself in the political and

administrative realms, in the allocation, distribution, and utilization of human, financial and material resources. National governments have also intruded, in one way or the other, in the activities of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including religious organizations. All efforts to decentralize decision-making power, allocation, as well as distribution of resources, have been frustrated by central governments in Nigeria and in Africa at large.

State control of national resources and monopoly of decision-making power has retarded socioeconomic development (Adedeji, Teriba, and Bugembe, (eds.) 1991):. Most of Africa's population lives below the poverty line. It has been rightly observed that pervasive intervention of the state in the management of national economies in post-independence African states, and in Nigeria in particular, remains the source of the tragedies which contemporary Africa is forced to live with (Mussa-Nda, 1988):.

Rather than face their responsibility of developing conditions for satisfying the basic needs of Nigerians, successive governments have earned for Nigeria a top place in the league of politically unstable countries. The scramble for power has been the major undoing of the country. Politicians as well as the military have indulged in it, with the cumulative effect that no viable and integrative political and economic order has been established, and most of what has been built up since political independence has been destroyed by bad governance and ever recurring instability, at least, until May 1999. Nigerians are faced with a situation in which the legitimacy of the Nigerian state, which derived from its interventionist role in the development process, especially the

provision of social services, has waned considerably. Military dictatorship until quite recently dominated the political arena with the attendant consequence of militarizing the Nigerian society. The inability of the civil society to assert itself *vis a vis* the state is also, a direct outcome of military domination. Nigerian governments have until very recently failed to allow the growth of, much more enhance, the democratic potentials of Nigerians. Emphasis was shamefully laid on crypto-imperialism run by the military complex.

Furthermore, public accountability has remained at a very low ebb. Corruption which since early 1980s gradually became an end of government, as well as an instrument of state policy, has since become a household word. It has become a debilitating reality at all levels of government, and from the highest levels of the political and business elites, to the ordinary person in the village. Its manifestations include the inflation of government contracts in return for kick backs in the public service; examination malpractices in the educational institutions, even in the universities, the taking of bribes etc.

At a time when a number of developing countries of Asia and Latin America, are recovering and are experiencing exponential growth, Nigeria's economic and social crises are deepening and worsening. The failure of the state administration is the major explanation for this malaise.

With particular reference to Nigeria, formal structures of government have become disappointingly a delusion. Successive governments have proved incapable of providing basic services, and those provided have dropped sharply in quality and quantity. In the same vein, the majority of

Nigerians are apathetic and alienated from the "criminalized" state. The masses have been brutalized by the state's enormous coercive and extractive capacities. The question is, faced with this disappointment by the state, why should scholars of Public Administration continue to focus most if not all their intellectual attention on the state?

Against such evidence of poor performance by the state administration in the promotion of social and economic development, scholars within the intellectual tradition of Public Choice have advocated de-emphasizing the State as the sole focus of political theory and policy analysis. These analysts have broadened the scope of Public Administration as a field of intellectual inquiry by, among other initiatives, calling attention to the self-governing and self-organizing capabilities of citizens. As such, they urge us to consider how such individuals can draw upon the human propensity to create and manage institutional arrangements in dealing with their problems of daily existence. In doing so, these scholars advocate a *polycentric* approach to institutional development. This then stands in contrast to the *monocentric* strategy that prevails in most theories of Public Administration.

To be more precise, students of public administration in Africa as a whole, and in Nigeria in particular, need to understand the ways in which people in these societies work out arrangements that are helpful to them in solving them, in including providing societal needs. They need to appreciate the limitations of the state, the civil services, and their potentials for organizing public services. In their problem-solving efforts, scholars of Public Administration in Nigeria need to lay emphasis on studying other structures of governance such as

are entrenched in the various communities across the country. This to us is an important step necessary for the transformation of the Nigerian society from a position of socio-economic backwardness to a position of growth and development. We should not forget that, it is not imperative that the state must champion and achieve socio-economic development in any society. Much of the development of the United States, for example, took place in the absence of an effective state. We argue in general, that the more effective the "state" becomes at least superficially, the more people turn to "the Government" to solve all of their problems. However, the Nigerian experience, turning to Government has more often than not, meant greater disappointment for the citizenry. We should drop the idea that the state manages the Nigerian society. It should be borne in mind that the ecological niches in which people live their lives require extensive self-governing capabilities in which local law and local knowledge become essential elements in human development. Understanding these self-governing capabilities, local law and local knowledge should attract the attention of public administration in Nigeria more than redesigning Nigerian civil service reforms for example. I disagree with the presumption of the World Bank that "development without an effective state" is impossible. I argue instead that, there are alternatives to the state in ensuring effective governance and in the promotion of socio-economic development. These alternative institutional strategies will not necessarily eliminate the state in governance and in the promotion of socio-economic development. This should be of great interest to scholars of public administration.

With respect to the poor performance of the state in economic development, observable micro-economic indicators revealed recently a very slow increase in the overall growth rate of the domestic economy, an alarming increase in the inflation rate, a concomitant crowding-out effect on credit availability to the private sector, and a sharp decline in the value of the domestic currency (the *naira*). In this perspective, at the Inter-Bank Foreign Exchange Market (IFEM), the average exchange rate of the *naira* slid from ₦9.90 to the US dollar in 1991 to an average of ₦17.45 to US \$1.00 in 1992. This represented a 43.2% depreciation in the exchange rate of the *naira*. During the dark days of the Abacha regime, the government fixed the Central Bank exchange rate of the *naira* at ₦22.00 to US \$1.00. But the Inter-Bank Foreign Exchange Market sold a US \$1.00 for between ₦82 and ₦83. As we observed above, this performance has been greatly influenced by the sluggish performance of the oil sector, which recorded an unimpressive growth rate of about 3.5% during 1992. (National Planning Commission, 1992):.

The poor state of the economy is also reflected in the level of domestic and external debts, which Nigeria has been accumulating since the early 1980s. As of December 1992, for example, there was a stock of domestic debt amounting to ₦161,993.6 billion. This showed an increase of ₦45,292.9 billion or 39% over the level of ₦161,200.2 billion in 1991. External debt outstanding was put at US \$34,497 billion at the end of 1992, compared with US \$2,060 billion at the end of 1984. This represented a 67.2% increase in *naira* terms as a result of the substantial depreciation of the *naira*. At the end of 1995, Nigeria's total debt was estimated at US \$32,585

billion, of which 66.5% was owed to the 'Paris Club,' 13.5% to other multilateral donors, 9.7% on promissory notes and 6.3% to the 'London Club.' Debt-servicing arrears for 1995 amounted to US \$1,124 billion. The Nigerian government allocated US \$2,000 million for external debt-servicing payments in the 1997 budget (the same level of debt-servicing that it had paid in each of the preceding six years). In February 1997, the government announced a reduction in external debt to US \$28,060 million, at the end of 1996 without further debt rescheduling. That notwithstanding, debt-servicing payments due in 1997 were US \$4,980 million, and, with accumulated arrears from 1996 and earlier included, Nigeria's debt-servicing bill in 1997 was put at US \$16,104 million, and in April 1997 the World Bank estimated Nigeria's total foreign debt at US \$31,407 billion.

The growth in the foreign debt is not necessarily an anathema, as far as the majority of development economists are concerned. According to these economists, it is worthwhile for developing countries like Nigeria to be net importers of capital for a significant period. It is noted that quite a good number of the developed countries of today relied to a certain extent on foreign borrowing for their development. But in their cases, exports were rising commensurately with debt service. Secondly, the size of their non-interest current account deficit was neither too large, nor did it grow too rapidly. But in the case of Nigeria, the growth in foreign debt has become unsustainable because it had a large size of non-interest current account deficit, and there is a perverse combination of high interest rates and a collapse of world trade. Consequently, Nigeria is undergoing critical liquidity

crises which manifest themselves in the country's inability to service and amortize its debts in the short term, in the time schedule and in the full amounts initially contracted.

Furthermore, the Nigerian bureaucratic institutions have played an unimpressive role in planning for national development. It was observed that in the various development plans enunciated since independence, public administrators failed to provide the necessary link between the executing ministries of development plans and the rural populations. Perhaps it should be noted here that grassroots populations were hardly involved in plan formulations. They were merely informed of what they should expect from the plan packages. Anise (1980) observed that the implementation of development plans hardly succeeded in raising the standard of living of the citizens, thereby aborting one of the key objectives of the Plans as contained in the plan documents. Selfishness of the bureaucrats, clashes between them and professional officers, combined with other factors, have wrecked plan implementation in Nigeria. It is observed that under the influence of higher civil servants, federal and state agencies more often than not pursued goods and projects that are "remote from basic needs of Nigerians, the majority of whom live in rural areas." In another situation, but focusing on the same subject of project implementation, it was reported that "...failed projects and wasted opportunities characterized the oil boom period" (Nigeria Political Bureau Report 1987):.

Oil sales, import permits, foreign investment, profit repatriation, monetary policy, and credit repayment are the key areas in which the Nigerian State and its indigenous bureaucrats corruptly exploit national economy to advantage

(Ake, 1985; Osoba, 1979):. In supporting the multi-national institutions in their programmes of exploitation, the Nigerian bureaucrats have been accused of doing so for their own personal capital accumulation. The implementation of the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree of 1972 on indigenization has been cited in this regard, The Decree, promulgated by the Gowon Military Administration, ordered the nationalization or partial nationalization of foreign investments, such as, commercial banks. In this respect, 40% of the shares of foreign-owned commercial banks were acquired by the Federal Military Government. The government also instructed that 40% of the loans granted by such banks should be reserved for, and made available to, Nigerian citizens. Critics in reviewing the implementation, have accused the bureaucrats of monopolizing these facilities and other benefits for their individual interests (Otobo, 1986: Achebe, 1983).

The Delivery of Public Services

On the situation with public services in Nigeria, Olowu recently observed that:

...The country's public utilities, as a social sector, have virtually collapsed. It will be charitable to describe the education system as epileptic. It is difficult to say whether the public schools are open or closed...state hospitals first degenerated from places that provide medical care to consulting clinics. Now places to die-alternatives, that is, to homes." Water, next to

air as the most elementary human need, is very scarce both in the rural areas and in the urban centres. In the place of water, the citizens have rubbish heaps. The quality of service rendered by NEPA, NITEL, NIPOST, etc. is a subject of continuous lamentation by the citizen."

Even today, the condition of public utilities, and public services generally, has continued to deteriorate, and precipitously too. In this lecture, I examine the performance of the state administration in the delivery of primary education and primary health care.

(a) Primary Education

The first major step taken at the national level with the objective of ensuring that all children of school-going age had an opportunity to go to the school of their parents' choice was the introduction of the Universal Primary Education Scheme in 1976.

At the onset, the federal government bore all the burdens for financing primary education, as the era of oil boom euphoria had not totally ended then. Two years later, as federal revenues began to witness serious disequilibrium, resulting of course from the glut in oil market, the federal government wanted the other levels of government to make inputs to the funding of primary education.

When the scheme took off, there were many rays of hope for success if not real, at least, with some assurance of it. For example, in 1970/71, the number of primary schools in

Nigeria was 14901 with a pupil population of 3,515,800. By the 1983/84 academic year, the figure had risen to 38,211 primary schools with an enrollment of 14,383,500. And in the 1984/85 academic year, there were 14.7 million pupils in the various primary schools, with the proportion of girls varying between 43% and 49% since the beginning of the 1980s. The increase in the number of primary schools was made possible with the aid of fairly heavy investments allocated in the Third National Development Plan (1980-1985). Table 1 provides details on the gross enrolment rate of primary education from 1983 till 1990.

Table 1. Gross Enrolment Rate at Primary Education in Nigeria, 1983-1990

Year	Primary School 1983 - 1990 Enrollment			Estimate of Population of 6-11 Yrs. Based on 1963 Census			Enrollment Ratio %		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1983	8,355	6,322	14,677	7,986	7,841	15,827	105	81	93
1984	8,051	6,332	14,383	8,252	8,101	16,353	98	78	88
1985	7,257	5,769	13,025	8,526	8,371	16,897	85	69	77
1986	7,183	5,732	12,915	8,810	8,650	17,460	82	66	74
1987	6,521	5,020	11,540	9,102	8,936	18,038	72	56	64
1988	7,308	5,383	12,691	9,404	9,231	18,635	78	58	68
1989	6,997	5,724	12,721	10,007	9,538	19,545	70	60	65
1990	7,7730	5,878	13,607	10,332	9,848	20,180	75	60	67

Sourc: Culled from the records of the Federal Ministry of Education and Youth Development, Lagos 1993.

With the increase in the number of primary schools and pupils registered in the primary schools, emergency measures were embarked upon to recruit and train more teachers all over the country. For example, more teacher training colleges were established. By 1971, there were only 1,857 teacher training colleges throughout the country. But by 1983/84, the figure had risen to 9,932 representing almost 600% increase.

However, one still observed that the number of teachers did not go up in the same proportion with the considerable increase in the number of primary school pupils. That is why the teacher/pupil ratio stood at 1:40 in 1984/85. The achievement was a minor improvement on the 1970/71 position, which was 1:34. In 1983/84, there were 359,700 primary school teachers, but half of this number were not considered to be sufficiently qualified. That is, the unqualified ones did not obtain the Grade II Teachers Certificate, which was the minimum qualification required for anyone wishing to teach in the primary schools. This accounts essentially for a very high rate of drop-outs, as well as a high rate of absenteeism, especially at harvest times. This problem seemed to have defied all solutions proposed and enunciated by government as Table 2 clearly indicates. The average drop-out rate of pupils between 1986 and 1992 was 43.20%.

Table 2. Primary School Percentage Dropout Rate by Sex

Year	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Male	42.80	51.10	49.60	45.20	39.70	39.40	29.10
Female	41.20	52.40	51.40	49.20	43.20	41.30	30.50

Source: Culled from the records of the Federal Ministry of Education and Youth Development, Lagos, 1993.

If, after nine years (from 1976 to 1985), since the universal primary education scheme was launched, the percentage of illiterates (by European standards) aged 14 years and over was 57.6% (by 1985), then there is a problem with the primary education scheme (see Table 3).

Table 3. Illiterates

Category	1962	1980	1985	1962	1980	1985
	1,000			% of age group		
15 years and over	17,980	26,759	27,429	84.6	66.0	57.6
Male	7,887	10,802	10,778	75.0	54.4	46.2
Female	10,093	15,957	16,651	94.0	77.0	68.5

Source: culled from Official Publications of the European Countries: Reports on ACP Countries Nigeria (1989: 34).

The Federal Government could not shy away from the fact that the Universal Primary Education failed to attain the success that the government had led Nigerians to expect (see Table 4).

Table 4. Short-term, Intermediate, and Long-term Targets for Primary Education Enrollment 1991-2000 (Projected from 1991 Census Figures)

Year	Population of 6-11 Year Olds Estimated from 20% of Total Population(M)	Projected Enrollment (million)	Expected % Enrollment	Teachers Required @ 40 Children per Teacher
1991	17.7	13.7	78	342,000
1992	18.2	14.8	80.4	365,000
1993	18.6	15.4	82.8	385,000
1994	19.1	16.3	85.2	407,500
1995	19.6	17.2	88.6	430,000
1996	20.1	18.1	90.0	452,500
1997	20.6	19.0	92.4	475,000
1998	21.1	20.0	94.8	500,000
1999	21.6	21.0	97.2	525,000
2000	22.2	22.1	99.6	552,500

Source: Federal Ministry of Education and Youth Development (Lagos: 1993).

Table 4 indicates that the estimated population of children aged between 6 and 11 years in 1992 was 18.2 million. Projections for the rest of the years in the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first century are also indicated on the table. If it is assumed that the actual primary school enrolment for 1992 was 14.8 million or 81.22% of the 18.2 million children of school age, about 3.4 million children would still not have had access to basic education. If all the 18.2 million children had access to primary education, 455,000 teachers would be required. But in 1992, there were 302,239 teachers available, leaving a shortfall of 152,761.

The official explanations for this serious disequilibrium in the primary education sector include, early withdrawal of

girls from schools for marriage, especially in the northern part of the country, and boys for apprenticeship, especially when it is evident that the parents would not be able to fund secondary and post-secondary education. In addition, economic pressure on some parents led them to send their children into the labour market to augment family income. Some were even "sent" directly to the farms. Government also blames the deterioration in the quality of primary education on premature promotion solicited by parents and effected by teachers and head teachers so that children could proceed to the secondary schools early enough. This practice was said to be prevalent in the urban centres.

But there is more to this official explanation in so far as the primary education management is concerned. The Elinor Ostrom-led research group's investigation into the delivery of public goods and services in Nigeria, that focused on primary education and primary health care in 1991, highlights the low level of commitment (especially financial commitment) of the federal government to the success of primary education. The federal government did not hesitate to withdraw sharply from funding primary education as the impact of the oil glut was biting harder on the government. Unfortunately, the sub-national governments (state and local) were worse off, since they too depend on federal revenues, which of course have become highly unpredictable (Ayo et al, 1993: 32-33).

A more fundamental problem arising from the above relates to the institutional context within which the primary education scheme has been implemented in Nigeria. The same affects the Primary Health care scheme too, as we shall see shortly. The Primary Education Scheme has been a baby of the

Federal Government. The latter has been responsible for formulating policies on primary education. The sub-national governments have been used more or less as agents of implementation of centrally decided policies. The local governments were constitutionally endowed with the responsibility for managing primary education.

Unfortunately, they are hardly in charge, beyond holding responsibility for the payment of primary school teachers' salaries. Worse still, for quite a long time, parents were hardly given a say in the management of primary education, beyond choosing the primary school their children would attend. Planning for primary education hardly involved the citizens. Government ignored (so it seemed) the socio-cultural peculiarities of the multiethnic groups of the country in planning for primary education. Therefore, government could not stimulate greater understanding of, and appreciation for, and sense of commitment to government's "efforts" at addressing the people's needs through the delivery of primary education. This perhaps explains the withdrawal of pupils from schools as noted earlier, which was explained by the government as arising from a desire for early marriage and from responses to economic pressure. While the latter could represent remote causes, the primary factor, is the yawning gap that exists between government and its intentions on the one hand, and that which exists between these and people and their understanding of what government is doing on the other hand. This is quite the case in very many rural areas. Government has been severely criticized for its strategy in the management of primary education, especially its failure to realize that the delivery of primary education should be a

responsibility of the citizens acting collectively through their own corporate instrumentalities, while government provides the necessary support. The government failed to mobilize the citizens to make the necessary inputs to the successful delivery of primary education.

Perhaps these criticisms and the glaring inadequacies of the system of managing primary education led the Babangida administration to launch a fresh plan for primary education in 1988. The new scheme was labeled "Basic Education for All." The basic objective of the scheme was to ensure that all children in Nigeria, irrespective of sex, background, religion and physical condition receive the kind of education capable of "fitting them into the society." A new decree (Decree 31 of 1988) was also promulgated to address, among other things, the problem of funding primary education, which has, avoidably, become almost an intractable problem. Funding of primary education assumed an intergovernmental character and the "three tiers" of government were to make financial inputs to the funding of primary education. Thus, a National Primary Education Commission was created, and all financial contributions from the various levels of government were to be deposited in a special coffer created at the commission and the commission was charged with administering the funds.

The National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) had representatives at the state and at the local government levels. The state offices were the State Primary Education Boards (SPEB), while at the local government level, they were referred to as Local Government Education Authority. There were District Education Committees and the Village Education Committees. The latter played only advisory roles. Members of

these District and Village committees expressed opinions that were often ignored, and in fact, these two levels were participatory channels that were merely symbolic. That is, the members felt that they were making inputs to the management of primary education, but in the real sense, they were not making any significant impact. Government sought some cooperation with citizens through these committees, but to me, such cooperation was more or less informal. As a matter of fact, citizens could not have made any serious impact on the management of primary education. This is because the committees had hardly settled down when the National Primary Education Commission and its subsidiaries were abolished in 1990.

In 1991, Decree 3 was promulgated, giving legal backing to a new institutional arrangement established at the local level to "manage" primary education. This was the Local Government Education Authority that was to be managed by Local Government Education Committee. Membership of this committee included, among others, a representative in the Local Government Area, one representative of the Parents' and Teachers Association in each local government area, two representatives each of religious organizations, and the District Heads of the local government area. But, again, this arrangement was hardly able to make any impact when its architect, General Babangida, was forced to relinquish power in 1993. There was no meaningful effort made again at getting the citizens to make their own inputs to the management of primary education. Essentially, citizen participation in the programme has not been consistent. Primary Education has not regained its stability for these and some other reasons.

The new effort of the Obasanjo civilian administration at revamping primary education is still to fully materialise.

Primary Health Care (PHC): Health for all in the year 2000? (Brudon, 1981)

Most of the comments made about how primary education has been handled in Nigeria with minimum recognition accorded the inputs of the people are also valid, in respect of the primary health care. My objective therefore in this section is to elaborate the arguments developed in the preceding paragraphs by identifying, how they affect also specifically primary health care. Emphasis is laid on the problems associated with institutional relationships in the management of primary health care.

A healthy work-force and citizenry are a *sine qua non* for economic growth and for overall national development. It is probably in realization of this that the federal government initiated a new health policy in 1986, which focused on primary health care. In initiating this policy, the expectation was that health would be available to all by the year 2000. But after twelve years' experience of implementation, it is legitimate to ask the question (a) how much has been achieved, and (b) in what circumstances were these achievements recorded? And also (c) were these achievements (if any) as a result of effective institutional relationships between the operators and the target populations?

Short Review of the Implementation of the Phc

Available data derived from vital statistics, recent surveys and investigations carried out by World Bank agencies, as well as interested donor agencies put the percentage of the total populations with access to health care in 1993 at 67%. In 1980, the figure was 40%. In the same year, 1993 for which data was available, only 40% of the total population had access to potable water and 63% of the same population could boast of access to sanitation. Furthermore, it is revealed that the infant mortality rate per 1000 live births in 1994 was 81, representing a reduction of just 8% from the 1980 figure, which was 99 deaths per 1000 live births. Similarly, it was observed that between 1989 and 1995, 43% of children of under five years were malnourished. Furthermore, the maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births between 1989 and 1995 was found to be 1027.

By the current year - 2000, however, it is hoped that the infant mortality rate would be less than 50 per 1000 live births. For this to happen, there must be improvement in reduction of the infant mortality rate by 82.8% and a reduction of the under five mortality rate by 172.9%. Research findings are yet to confirm that this has any possibility of being attained.

Table 5. Comparative Data: Nigeria/Developed Countries in 1987

	<i>Nigeria</i>	<i>Developed Country</i>
<i>Crude Death Rate (per 1000 population)</i>	16	10
<i>Infant Mortality Rate (per 1000 population)</i>	85	20
<i>Infant Mortality Rate (per 1000 population)</i>	85	20
<i>Urban</i>	64	20
<i>Rural</i>	89	20
<i>Rate of National Increase</i>	3.3	1.0

Source: Lagos Federal Office of Statistics Bulletin 1988 Edition, p. 36.

What is important to note is that serious problems persist in the Nigerian health sector and with particular reference to the primary health care. There is very slow progress made in this perspective (see Table 6).

Several reasons have been suggested for the relative slow progress made in the implementation of the Primary Health Care scheme. Some of these factors are poor intergovernmental relations, erratic funding, poor revenue generation, unqualified personnel, poor accountability, unmotivated workforce, management incapacities, poor planning, waste of aid from donor agencies or misuse of same, to mention just a few.

Table 6. Status of Nigerian PHC System with Respect to PHC Targets 2000 AD by March 1994

<i>PHC Component</i>	<i>% Target Achieved by the End of 1992</i>
<i>EPI Coverage</i>	54.5%
<i>Antenatal Care</i>	48.4%
<i>Nutritional Status: Pregnant Women</i>	0.344
<i>Nutritional Status: Children</i>	39.7%
<i>Attendance at Delivery</i>	52.3%
<i>Contraceptive Prevalence</i>	38.0%
<i>Access to Health Services</i>	43.3%
<i>Access to Portable Water</i>	NA
<i>Access to Latrine</i>	NA
<i>Availability of Essential Drugs</i>	NA

Source: Adapted from Olowu and Wunsch Orientation Report for the Workshop Governance, Primary Health Care, and Local Government Authorities in Nigeria, March 1994, p. 8.

But, in addition to the foregoing, there is a wide gap between the architects and operators of the Primary Health Care scheme and the supposed beneficiaries of the scheme. So far, research has shown that, there has been no concerted effort made by the operators of the PHC scheme to take an inventory of the indigenous medical facilities on ground, to measure their strengths and weaknesses. Failure on the part of the operators of the PHC makes it difficult for them to know exactly what the needs of the people whom they claim to be serving are. In fact, the operators are more or less

ignorant of the priorities of the local people regarding health services. The capabilities of the people to make meaningful inputs to the delivery of primary health care have either been ignored by the government, or, at best, these capabilities have been underplayed.

Furthermore, research has also confirmed that quite a good number of these operators were not prepared to listen, even when the local communities took the initiative to offer suggestions. At best, those suggestions were merely noted with hardly any intention to use such suggestions for improved performance by the PHC operators (Olowu and Wunsch, 1994; Wunsch and Olowu, 1997).

The present attitude of the operators of the primary health care does not encourage preparation by the local populace in Nigeria for self-reliance in health care delivery. Consequently, if the European countries and America decide to stop shipping their drugs and equipment to Nigeria today, the operators of the PHC are likely to face enormous problems and they are likely to fall back on the operators of the indigenous health institutions, this time not to give them (local populations) orders, but to learn how things get put together for effective delivery of health services.

I have discussed elsewhere the case of an African head of state who, as a result of an obsession with poorly understood imported ideology, decided to imprison a group of traditional healers in a given village for "violating" the laws of the country that were based on socialist ideology. But almost immediately, his attention was drawn to the fact that even the same ideology recommended an effective use of the imprisoned traditional healers for the successful

implementation of the "socialist"-oriented programmes of development (Ayo, 1984: 361-372). The socialist ideology supports self-reliance by people in resolving their problems. In the encounter, the traditional healers gained an upper hand, and the head of state in question was forced to release them from prison. This was in consonance with the 'socialist' slogan which was being echoed constantly in the Republic of Benin during the time under review. The Beninois government expressed its belief in "compter d'abord sur nos propres forces." "We should rely first on our indigenous resources."

The failure of the Nigerian state is rooted in a crisis of governance. Once the authority of the state depends upon a monopoly of the control of force, contest over who exercises the rent-seeking prerogatives of government easily turns into either a covert or/and overt war among contending factions. The quest for power is not conditioned by the requirement to be of service in addressing the problem-solving needs of the population. Yet, people still need to address the requirements of life. Where then do they turn?

A constructive response can be found in Alexis de Tocqueville's (1966) *Democracy in America*. Instead of turning to the state as the fundamental basis for the constitution of order in human societies, Tocqueville turned to the people as people in a democratic society were the focus of his concern. In framing that analysis, he was concerned with the physical circumstances in which they lived, their historical background and ideas that were paramount in establishing their identity and their social condition especially with regard to the laws of inheritance and property relationships. In dealing with the "sovereignty of the people" he considered it important to turn

to the village or township people in their local circumstances and how they related to one another. In this perspective, Tocqueville asserted that "the township is the only association so well rooted in nature that wherever men assemble it forms itself". He found this type of collective association to be universal among mankind. They exist among all nations.

Tocqueville conceded that "strong and enterprising government" would encroach upon the independence of the community as the basic unit of collective organization, but that people, through experience of living together through successive generations, could work out arrangements among themselves for meeting the requirements of life. In fact, the particular accommodation reached in struggles for political dominance are likely to involve some combination of authority imposed upon localities, and authority shared among the people as they relate each to the other, and by so doing organize themselves to meet the requirements of life.

As reflected at the beginning of this address, Tocqueville is suggesting a shift in intellectual perspective, with regard to the possibility of a system of democratic administration in contrast to a system of bureaucratic administration. Democratic administration, à la Tocqueville, turns on a polycentric pattern of institutional development. Tocqueville's vision of a society with a polycentric order is one

in which all men would feel an equal love and respect for the laws of which they consider themselves the authors, in which the authority of the government would be respected as necessary, and not

divine, and in which the loyalty of the subject to the chief magistrate would not be a passion but a quiet and rational persuasion. With every individual in the possession of rights which he is sure to retain a kind of manly confidence and reciprocal courtesy would arise from all classes removed alike from pride and servility. The people well acquainted with their own interests would satisfy its requirements. The voluntary association of citizens might then take the place of the individual authority of the nobles and the community would be protected from tyranny and license.

Democratic administration, is characterized by (a) an assumption that everyone is qualified to participate in the conduct of public affairs (b) the notion that scope of the power of command is to be kept at a minimum, and (c) the concept that all important decisions should be resolved through inclusive forums of resolution (Ostrom, 1991:68). Democratic administration thus focuses on a people-centred and a people managed system of governance. Such a system of governance should enhance popular participation in the management of public affairs. It also advocates recognition and respect for those institutions created and managed by the people for resolving problems of common interest. These

institutions in the Nigerian case, are referred to as indigenous institutions. These are traditional and non-traditional in composition. Scholars of public administration should pay attention to ensuring effective correspondence between these indigenous institutional arrangements and the formal structures of the state, where applicable.

I cannot possibly list all these indigenous institutions here. I can only mention a few, and comment on what they do, or are capable of doing. Some of the notable indigenous institutions include traditional political institutions, Community Development Associations, Informal Credit, Savings Associations, the Age-Sets, Towns Unions, etc.

i. Community Development Association (CDA)

Community Development Association (CDA) has been referred to as "a confederation of voluntary mutual aid associations formed by individuals from a particular rural community but resident in different towns in the country and at times outside it" (Enemuo, 1990). Most of the Community Development Associations in Ogun state with headquarters in Abeokuta have this characteristic. Enemuo uses the term "community development association" interchangeably with "Town Union." The development of "Town Union" is more often than not championed by the modernizing elites who are supposed to be more "enlightened and better travelled members of the community." Some analysts have grouped Town Unions, and even age-grades, as belonging to the class of community development associations (Olowu, et al., 1991):. While it is possible to group these associations as

CDA, one must recognize that many of them still exist on their own as distinct institutions within many communities. They are yet to metamorphose into CDA. But, for ease of reference, I categorize these associations as CDA in view of the common objectives that they pursue, primary among which is the promotion of development. The associations coordinate the implementation of development projects for the benefit of their various communities. Both the "modernizing elites" who dominate the CDA, and the "traditional elites" who control the age-grades for example, are expected to join hands together to raise funds and to organize labour for executing self-help projects in their various localities. The Community Development Association of any community could have branches across the country, but such branches are usually represented in the (annual) general assemblies of their towns and at fund raising ceremonies for the purpose of executing particular development projects.

While it is agreed that most community development associations emphasize the need for minimum literacy among members who aspire to positions of leadership in the associations, literacy qualification is not necessarily a requirement for membership of the association. More often than not, the basic qualifications for membership vary from being an indigene of a given community to expressing willingness to make adequate contributions to the activities of the association. Other forms of Community Development Associations are **womens' associations, religious groups, and hunters' associations.**

Several characteristics of CDAs in Nigeria distinguish them from other local organizations, such as, local

governments. Many of the CDAs write and adopt independent constitutions that guide their activities. These constitutions are not imposed on the members by "the government." The local governments cannot do the same. Their laws are imposed on them more often by the central and the state governments (Onibokun and Faniran, 1992).

Furthermore, Community Development Associations are more accountable to their members, and to the community members at large, than local government councils are. Several measures are introduced by Community Development Associations to enforce accountability. Such measures include public ridicule of erring members as well as seizure of the properties of members when they refuse to pay their own levies, or the seizures of properties of families of such members if the latter are not resident in the affected communities. Quite a good number of these community development associations have been found to be very successful in their endeavours. I discuss briefly selected cases.

ii. Informal Credit/Savings Associations

These associations are involved with thrift and credit activities. They promote and strengthen small-scale industry and handicrafts. In addition, they encourage saving habits through the operation of insurance and credit unions and they contribute quite significantly to socio-economic development in Third World countries, Nigeria inclusive.

The informal Credit/Savings Associations excel in their desire for equitable distributions of economic wealth. They lay emphasis on economic self-reliance and self-sufficiency.

A common explanation for the success of these non-governmental organizations in development is the type of leadership with which each of them is endowed. Good leadership is said to have facilitated the stimulation of collective action in most of the non-governmental organizations. This has been more glaring among the CDAs, and the informal credit and savings associations.

The good performance of the leaders has manifested itself in their proven commitment to the aspirations and problems of NGOs. The leaders have been complimented for their high level of accountability and responsiveness. As a result of the commitment of the leaders to the cause of their respective organizations, they too (the leaders) have enjoyed the loyalty of their followers. Consequently, effective cooperation is ensured among the leaders and the followers, and this has facilitated the smooth execution of projects as well as revenue generation.

Despite the good performance and the evidence of potentials for improved performance by the NGOs, they still face some critical management problems as regards the promotion of socio-economic development.

iii. Problems of Non-Governmental Organizations in Nigeria

There are a series of problems which the NGOs in Africa at large and in Nigeria in particular face, which limit their performance capabilities. Demeke Getachew has tried to summarize these problems under the following headings among others:

Problems of scale
Problems of focus
Management capability
Poor coordination of activities
Lack of reflective capacity

Although NGOs in Nigeria face these problems at various levels either singly or combined, it will not be possible to consider all these problems in this lecture. We shall therefore, limit ourselves to considering some of the management problems facing the NGOs in Nigeria.

Management Problems of NGOs

Inadequate professional skills in the area of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation has been identified as an important problem facing Non-Governmental Organizations. Demeke has attributed "lack of effective management" in very many NGOs in Africa to a number of factors.

In the first instance, many of the NGOs find it difficult to mobilize resources to retrain staff that will oversee the activities of the NGOs. It is believed that if the leaders of the NGOs, for example the Community Development Associations, are brought together at round table meetings or workshops and are allowed to share experiences through oral presentations on how they cope with the common problems that face them, these leaders will be able to learn from one another.

Poor financial management is another problem facing NGOs in Nigeria, for example. In some of my research on local

institutions, I discovered that several of the informal thrift and credit associations in the states covered by the studies suffer from poor financial management, which in itself stems from inadequate record keeping and lack of knowledge of accounting procedures.

Still on the issue of financial management, Non-Governmental Organizations are known to have been spending their business capital on ceremonies. I am in touch with some researchers who are currently studying how saw-millers spend their business capital. Findings confirm that funds are spent unproductively by the saw-millers. They need be taught basic principles of accounting and how to re-invest proceeds from their business in more profitable ventures.

Finally, leadership crisis is another management problem facing very many non-governmental organizations in Nigeria. It has been discovered that it is NGOs whose leaders are ineffective, inefficient, irresponsible that are less successful. Where there is poor leadership, organizational sustainability is jeopardized. The situation could even be compounded where there are endless conflicts and intra-organizational acrimonies.

These problem areas of indigenous institutions should be of great interest to scholars of public administration in Nigeria. Efforts need be made to assist these indigenous institutions in finding appropriate long-term solutions to the problems facing them. It is re-iterated that these institutions remain relevant to conflict resolution, reconciliation, and development processes in their localities. They are relevant in these critical areas because in some cases they represent locally evolved solutions to problems of collective action.

I recognize that there are difficulties in trying to study the indigenous institutions, their autochthonous quality and the problems that face these institutions. These difficulties stem from the variability that characterizes these institutions, their localities, even though certain characteristics, principles, norms and *modus operandi* remain common to these institutions. One is therefore faced with a problem of understanding the patterns of variability which characterize local institutional arrangements in Nigeria. One is constrained to study, appreciate and understand each set of indigenous institutions within their socio-cultural setting. But, if we realize that efforts in development have to be rooted in indigenous capacities for problem-solving, it will be accepted that no efforts can be considered too much to understand how these institutions function, the contexts in which they operate, the problems and incentives which they face.

In recent years, there have been efforts by some social scientists to study indigenous institutions, which some of them regard generally as non-governmental organizations. Efforts of these scholars have focused on identifying the indigenous institutions, their characteristics and their overall involvement in infrastructural development in their localities.

With specific reference to the Nigerian case, the Research Group on Local Institutions has since 1988 been studying different aspects of indigenous institutions in Nigeria. This research group is made up of scholars drawn from three universities and a major Social Science Research Centre and its secretariat is at the Department of Public Administration, Obafemi Awolowo University Ile Ife. I have the privilege of leading this Research Group currently.

The Research Group in Ife has launched and completed two elaborate research projects focusing on institutional arrangements created by the Nigerian local populations to tackle development, and development-related problems. Emphasis is also laid on examining how far people exercise their self-governing and self-organizing potentials.

The latest of the Research Group's efforts is an examination of how Nigeria's villages and cities are governed through indigenous institutions. These research efforts have been funded mainly through grants from the Ford Foundation.

The Research Group has identified, fairly exhaustively, indigenous institutions in ten sampled communities (urban, semi-urban and rural), taken from across the country. The findings confirmed the existence of a multitude of indigenous institutions in the affected communities. In addition, it was discovered that these indigenous institutions play active roles in governance and in the promotion of socio-economic development in their localities.

There are others who have examined the roles of indigenous institutions in the promotion of socio-economic development. For example, Warren (1992) examined how indigenous Nigerian organizations can be strengthened to enhance their capabilities for development, having studied the evolution of indigenous institutions in Ara community in the Egbedore Local Government Area of Osun State. The latter was created in August 1991 along with eight other states by the now defunct Babangida Military Administration. From Warren's analysis, one observes that an important preliminary step towards a successful strengthening of the indigenous organizations is to have a clear understanding of the

indigenous knowledge systems of the people and adequate familiarity with the terrain as well. Of course, that was how he too proceeded, in the communities studied in Nigeria and Ghana.

Claude Ake (1990) and Goran Hyden (1990) have indicated that Africans have missed the bus as regards development by rejecting their indigenous institutions. According to these authors, no development can be achieved in any African society outside the cultural setting of the people. Progress in development can only be made if architects of development begin with what the people are familiar with, and then build on their knowledge and technology.

One should also mention the efforts of Professor Adebayo Adedeji's African Centre for Development and Strategic Studies (ACDESS) in the study of community-based, and community-organized institutions, and the role of the latter as agents of development in their localities. The centre disseminates ideas on how Africa can draw strength from its own past, and its potential in human and natural resources to build the future of Africa, on the basis of self-respect, self-reliance and freedom. The Centre pays particular attention to the study of grassroots organizations in the development of civil society in African countries.

The first major research publication of ACDESS in the areas mentioned above is titled, "Nigeria: Renewal from the Roots?" published in London by Zed Books, in 1997. The book analyzes how ordinary Nigerians have taken matters into their own hands, and how they have settled down to the work of local development themselves, largely by-passing government in the process. The book leaves the impression that, whatever

hope there is for a better future in Africa rests with the "courageous" efforts of ordinary people in their respective communities. The book raises fundamental questions such as: "What chance has popular participation in the conflict-ridden and divided society?" and "What relationship is there between popular participation, democracy and development?" Answers to these and other questions seem to have been provided in the second book in preparation, by the centre, which focuses on alternative systems of governance in Nigeria's local communities. I was privileged to co-edit this forthcoming book with Professor Adebayo Adedeji.

In a related dimension to the above, the Centre for African Settlement Studies and Development (CASSAD), Ibadan Nigeria, takes keen interest in critical evaluations of the achievements and potentials of community-based institutions as agents of development in Nigeria. This, for example, is the main focus of a recent publication by the centre (CASSAD) titled: "Community-Based Organizations in Nigerian Urban Centres: A Critical Evaluation of their Achievements and Potentials as Agents of Development," published in 1996. This study covers fourteen cities from the six ethno-geographical regions of Nigeria. It provides a detailed study of the frequency, location, types, characteristics, structure, function and operations at the grassroots level. It highlights the achievements of community-based organizations, with particular reference to their role in Nigeria's development. This study draws much inspiration from the works of the Research Group on Local Institutions in Nigeria.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I call once again for a broader perspective to the definition, scope and functions of public administration as a field of intellectual inquiry. The state-centred approach to the study of public administration is no longer adequate. The approach encourages analysing structure and conduct of government more often at the top, and using this to relate to the rest of the society. That is why scholars of public administration in Africa have tended to neglect the initiative, the activity and the enterprise of those concerned with the development and operation of collective undertakings to deal with common problems.

I re-iterate that, scholarship in public administration transcends developing formal representations of the state. It includes undertaking the studies the formal and informal institutions of governance even at the community level. The study of public administration should move away from the Weberian approach. I re-emphasize too, that the approach adopted by Alexis de Tocqueville to the study of public administration as it has been reflected in his analysis of the configuration of institutions in the United States remain more appropriate. I consider this approach as an important step towards finding solutions to the conceptual and methodological problems being faced by African scholars in the study of public administration. This approach represents a paradigm shift, putting people first and building upon their background of common knowledge.

If scholars of public administration in Nigeria find it reasonable to adopt the Tocquevillian approach to the study of

public administration, it will become necessary to reconceptualise the term - public administration.

Based on what I have learnt from Tocqueville and other public choice scholars on how Americans craft appropriate institutions to resolve problems of daily existence, I am inclined to consider public administration as the facility for making things happen, efforts at relating ideas to deeds to be accomplished, and acknowledging that deeds are accomplished by the ways people relate with one another, thereby bringing possibility to reality.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, this is my submission and I thank you for listening.

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Public Administration Review